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(71) Applicant

Shing-Hsiung Wu

1 Lane 2

Chung Chen Road

Tan Sul

Taipei Hsien

Taiwan

(72) Inventor

Shing-Hsiung Wu

(74) Agents

Marks & Clerk

(54) Improvements in or relating
to making ice balls

(57) In the making of ice balls, an open spherical or fruit shaped bag 1 made of non-poisonous stretchy material, such as rubber, is used. The shape of the bag when filled matches that of a rigid, for instance semi-spherical concave holder 3 so that the liquid within the spherical bag can be frozen to be a colourless, transparent or coloured ice ball without any mark of join on its surface. The ice ball may have the shape of any fruit, such as a cherry or apple and can have any desired colour.

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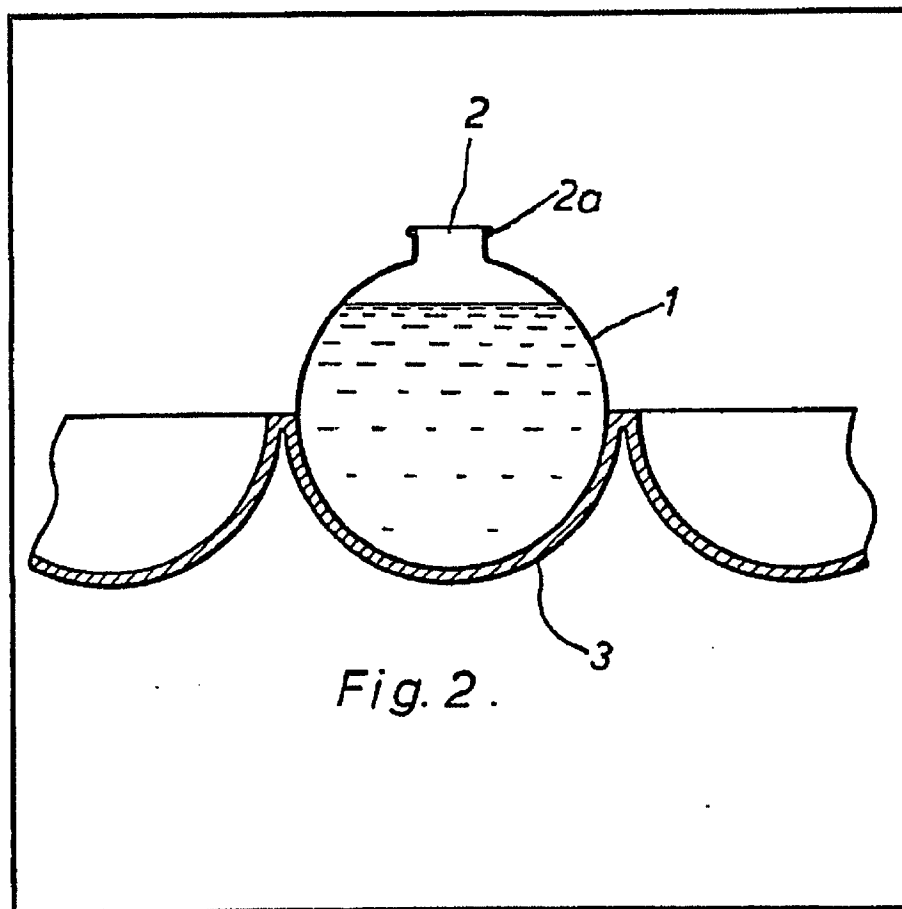


Fig. 2.

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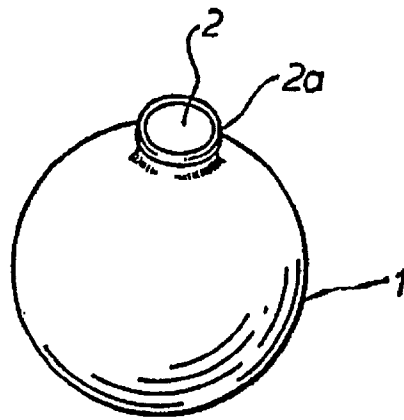


Fig. 1.

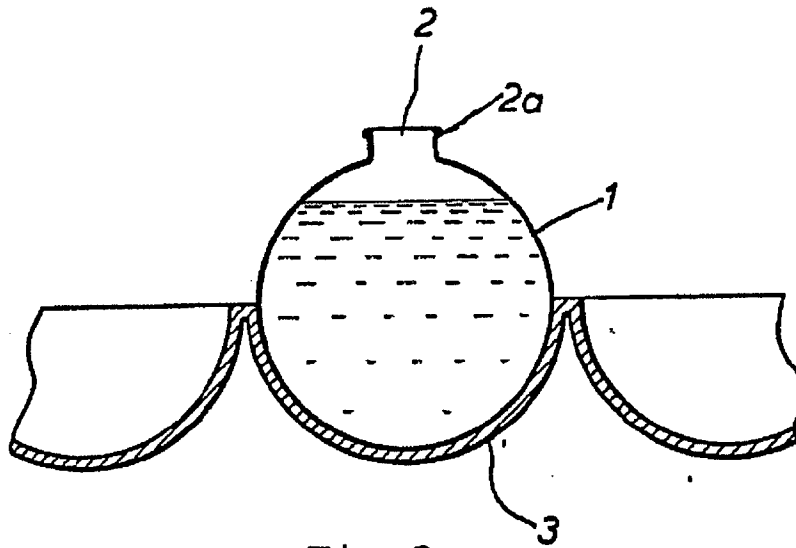


Fig. 2.

SPECIFICATION

Improvements in or relating to making ice balls

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The present invention relates to making ice balls. The advance of science promotes our living standards and human beings always undertake endless research for creation of products to meet requirements in material enjoyment. For instance, the invention of the refrigerator caused a revolutionary improvement in eating standards, such as the maintenance of food freshness, the maintenance of the nice taste of vegetables and fruits and allowing us to enjoy ice-cool beverages on hot summer days. Especially during the summer, only little activity can cause perspiration and one becomes thirsty after spending some time out-doors. One or two cubes of ice may then be used in water for refreshment.

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Ice cubes are generally made by refrigerating water in a shallow container wherein space is partitioned so that the ice formed can be of small cubes. Such small ice cubes are made for the purpose of cooling water in the simplest manner.

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According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for making an ice ball comprising at least partially filling an open bag made of stretchy material with a liquid, freezing the liquid within the bag to form an ice ball and removing the ice ball through the opening by deforming the stretchy material so as to provide an ice ball substantially without any mark of join on its surface.

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According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided an apparatus for making an ice bag comprising an open bag of expandable material and a holder having a concave shape complimentary to that of the bag when filled.

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The invention will be further described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

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Figure 1 shows a stretchy bag; and

Figure 2 is a cross sectional view showing a stretchy bag containing liquid on a concave holder.

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A preferred method of making ice balls, utilizes one or more open-ended bags made of elastic or stretchy material, such as rubber or other similar non-poisonous materials. As show in Fig. 1, a bag body has a spherical shape. The bag body 1 has an upward projection in which there is an opening 2, with a thick edge 2a at its circumference. The edge 2a prevents cracking or tearing when the opening 2 is stretched or further opened.

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Cool water, fruit juice or other beverages are poured into the bag body 1 to fill it to about 90% of its total capacity. The filled bag body 1 is placed on a concave holder 3 (Fig. 2) which comprises a plurality of semi-spheri-

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cal portions. The concave holder 3 is made of high heat-conductivity material such as aluminium and its size just matches the external dimensions of the bag body 1. One or more filled bag bodies 1 and the concave holder are then placed in a freezer for freezing. Finally, an ice ball with a shape substantially identical to that of the bag body 1 is formed. The ice ball can be removed from the bag body 1 through the opening 2. The bag body 1 and its corresponding concave holder 3 may have the appearance of a fruit, such as a cherry or apple. Ice balls made in this way can contain the flavour of a fruit and can be given any desired colour. Such ice balls may be made at home or in coffee-houses or restaurants, and provide a more elegant alternative to conventional ice cubes.

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85 CLAIMS

1. A method of making an ice ball comprising at least partially filling an open bag made of stretchy material with a liquid, freezing the liquid within the bag to form an ice ball and removing the ice ball through the opening by deforming the stretchy material so as to provide an ice ball substantially without any mark of join on its surface.

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2. A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the bag is spherical or has the shape of a fruit with the opening formed in an upward projection having a thickened edge around the opening in order to prevent tearing or cracking during removal of the ice ball.

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3. An apparatus for making an ice ball, comprising an open bag of expandable material and a holder having a concave shape complimentary to that of the bag when filled.

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4. An apparatus as claimed in claim 3, in which the bag has a projection with a thickened end around the opening.

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5. An apparatus as claimed in claim 3 or 4, in which the bag is made of rubber.

6. An apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 3 to 5, in which the bag is spherical or has the shape of a fruit.

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7. A method of making an ice ball, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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8. An apparatus for making an ice ball, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.